

Thinking That God is Like Man!

V. 16. *“But to the wicked God says: what right have you to declare My statutes, or take My covenant in your mouth. V. 17. Seeing you hate instruction and cast My words behind you? V. 18. When you saw a thief, you consented with him. And have been a partaker with adulterers. V. 19. You give your mouth to evil, and your tongue frames deceit. V. 20. You sit and speak against your brother; You slander your own mother’s son. V. 21. “These things you have done, and I kept silent; **You thought that I was altogether like you; But I will rebuke you, and set them in order before your eyes. V. 22. Now consider this, you who forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver: V. 23. Whoever offers praise glorifies Me; and to him who orders his conduct aright I will show the salvation of God,”** Psalm 50:16-23.*

This is a psalm attributed to Asaph, who began the psalm by referring to God, as *“the Mighty One,”* v. 1, to Whom belongs *“every beast of the forest,”* as well as *“the cattle on a thousand hills,”* v. 10,11, including *“the world..and all its fullness,”* v. 12, and upon whom we should *“call...in the day of trouble,”* v. 15.

God, through this Psalm addressed certain ones as *“My saints,”* v. 5, and as *“My people,”* v. 7, but in our text, Psa. 50:16-23, He turned His attention to *“the wicked,”* v. 16, and to those *“who forget God,”* v. 22. Specifically, those identified as *“the wicked”* were people who hated *“instruction”* and cast God’s *“word behind”* themselves, v.17, who consented with thieves and had been *“a partaker with adulterers,”* v. 18, who gave their *“mouth to evil,”* used their tongues to frame *“deceit,”* v. 19, who spoke evil against their *“brother,”* and even slandered their *“own mother’s son,”* v. 20!

And while they were doing these evil things God *“kept silent;”* hence He said *“You thought that I was altogether like you,”* v. 21. They were misinterpreting the longsuffering of God, mistakenly concluding that divine silence constituted divine **consent!** God loves righteousness and hates iniquity, Heb. 1:9, and being the *“Almighty God,”* Gen. 17:1, He has the power to wipe all sinners off the face of the earth in less time than it takes to blink an eye! But *“God is love,”* I John 4:8, and being a loving God He is also longsuffering. Indeed, *“the Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance,”* 2 Peter 3:9. In fact, Scripture affirms that *“the longsuffering of God is salvation,”* 2 Pet. 3:15. However, God’s longsuffering has its limitations! In the days of Noah *“the Lord said, My Spirit shall not strive with man forever,”* Gen. 6:3; hence, at the appointed time God brought *“the flood on the world of the ungodly,”* 2 Peter 2:5. And He has informed us that *“the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night,”* 2 Peter 3:10, at which time those who *“do not know God”* and who *“do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ”* will be *“punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,”* 2 Thess. 1:8-9!

As of now, the Lord has not returned from heaven to judge every soul, 2 Cor. 5:10, though He could come before you complete the reading of this article! Meanwhile

today, as during the time period of Asaph, multitudes are doing wrong, and God momentarily is keeping “*silent*,” causing multitudes to mistakenly conclude that **God** is “*altogether like*” they are, Psalm 50:21! Instead of measuring themselves by the divine standard, they are measuring God by themselves! What an eternally foolish and tragic mistake! What are some of the ways whereby this is done in today’s world?

1. Many conclude that since they can hide from man, they can hide from God! Adam and Eve, immediately after eating the forbidden fruit, unsuccessfully tried to hide themselves from God, Gen. 3:8. Jonah, trying to disobey God’s command to go and preach to the Ninevites, went in the opposite direction, trying unsuccessfully to flee “*from the presence of the Lord*,” Jonah 1:2-3. But God knows our “*sitting down*” and our “*rising up*,” and He has informed us that there is no place where we can successfully “*flee from*” His presence, Psalm 139:1-7.

2. Many think that since they are able to deceive man, they are also able to deceive God. How foolish! Scripture affirms that “*all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to Whom we must give account*,” Heb. 4:13. The Psalmist declared that “*the Lord knows the thoughts of man, that they are futile*,” Psalm 94:11. We cannot deceive God!

3. Many put their feelings on a par with the word of God, so they think God will permit their feelings to circumvent His word! But it won’t work! In the divine plan, our feelings derive from our faith, I Peter 1:8, and saving “*faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*,” Rom. 10:17. However, many have it reversed. They feel saved, so they believe they **are** saved. Some feel that Joseph Smith was a true prophet of God, so they believe that he **was** a true prophet of God. Others feel that Muhammed was God’s last great prophet, so they believe he **was** God’s last great prophet. They are allowing their feelings to supplant a “*thus saith the Lord*,” or in the words of our text, as it relates to this issue, they think **God** is “*altogether like*” they are!

4. Many believe that “it makes no difference what one believes so long as he is sincere,” so **they conclude that God believes the same thing!** They could not be more wrong! Why did God give us the Bible in the first place? God’s word “*is truth*,” John 17:17, and Jesus said “*you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*,” John 8:32. The Bible is abundantly clear on this issue! Anyone who perverts the gospel of Christ stands “*accursed*” before God, Gal. 1:8-9. Anyone who refuses to abide in the doctrine of Christ “*does not have God*,” 2 John 9,10. The Bible virtually closes with the warning against adding to or taking from the word of God; in fact, he who “*takes away from*” the word of God will have his name taken “*from the Book of life*,” Rev. 22:18-19!

5. Many believe that since sin does not bother them, then it does not bother God! But that is exactly what some in our opening text, Psalm 50:16-23, were doing! They consented with thieves, they hated instruction, they cast God’s word behind themselves, they used their mouth to speak evil, they slandered their own mother’s son, they partook with adulterers, etc.. And inasmuch as God did not immediately destroy them, they concluded that God was “*altogether like*” themselves! So it goes today. Multitudes lie, steal, fornicate, use profanity, get drunk, live perverted lives, and engage in evil continually, and seemingly have no qualms of conscience. Such is OK with them, so they conclude it is OK with God!

6. Many believe that baptism has nothing to do with salvation, that sprinkling is an

acceptable “mode” of baptism, that instrumental music in worship is fine, that one cannot fall from grace, that regular attendance in worship is not essential, etc., etc., so they conclude that, in these things, **God is “altogether like” they are!** But they are making the same mistake made by “wicked” people, Psalm 50:16, in the past. Such was wrong then; it is wrong now!

Conclusion: Many other examples could be cited of those who believe that **God** is “altogether like” they are. But these are sufficient to illustrate the point, namely this: We must not ascribe our feelings and our beliefs **to God**. To the contrary, we must look to His word for complete instruction on what to believe, what to do to be saved, how to live, and even how to think and feel! Let us not try to bring God down to our level. Let us become more and more **like God!**

**** —Bobby Witherington

“Sin may be very sweet in the beginning, bitter in the end.”